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**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
AMENDED CLAIMS (IPER) CLAIMS**

(Amendment to the claims under PCT Art. 34)

Amendment

To: the Examiner of the Japanese Patent Office

5 1. Identification of International Application PCT/JP03/11677

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4. Date of Notification 08.06.04

5. Subjects of Amendment Claims

6. Contents of Amendment

(1) Claim 1 is amended as indicated on the attached sheet.

20 7. Attachment

(1) Amended claims, pages 26 and 26/1*

* Pages 26 and 26/1 of the Japanese version correspond to page 30 of the
English translation

A Set of Claims

1. (amended) An apparatus for fractionating gypsum slurry, which is used to produce a gypsum board with a gypsum core covered with a sheet of paper for gypsum board liner,

5 which is provided on the mixer, the mixer being arranged so that calcined gypsum and water are mixed in a mixing area inside of a housing for preparation of the gypsum slurry, and that the gypsum slurry continuously flows from a hollow connector section into a chute section to be fed through a slurry discharge port of the chute section to said sheet of paper for gypsum board liner, and

10 which is used for fractionating a part of the gypsum slurry from said mixer and feeding the fractionated slurry to said sheet of paper: comprising a slurry fractionation port in fluid communication with a slurry delivery conduit, the slurry fractionation port being disposed at said chute section and/or said hollow connector section so as to fractionate the gypsum slurry in said chute section and/or said hollow connector section.

2. An apparatus as defined in claim 1, further comprising valve means for opening and closing said slurry fractionation port.

3. An apparatus as defined in claim 2, comprising a casing which
20 encloses the fractionation port and the valve means and which has a slurry delivery port, wherein said slurry delivery conduit is connected to said delivery port so as to be in fluid communication with said the fractionation port through an internal area of the casing.

4. An apparatus as defined in one of claims 1 through 3, wherein a foam
25 feeding port, which adds foam or foaming agent to the gypsum slurry for regulating density of the slurry, is disposed on said hollow connector section and/or said chute section.

5. An apparatus as defined in claim 4, wherein said foam feeding port is disposed between said fractionation port and said discharge port.

30 6. An apparatus as defined in claim 5, wherein both of said foam feeding port and said fractionation port are disposed on said chute section, and the fractionation port is located, upstream of the foam feeding port in a direction of flow of the slurry.